

BOROUGH OF



COLCHESTER

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

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Medical Officer of Health; School Medical Officer;

Medical Superintendent of the Isolation Hospital and Sanatorium;

Tuberculosis Officer and Public Analyst;

1924



Colchester :

WILES & SON, TRINITY STREET.

BOROUGH OF



COLCHESTER.

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1924-1925.

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MISS K. C. BRAIDWOOD, R.R.C.

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HEALTH OFFICES,

TRINITY STREET,

20th April, 1925.

YOUR WORSHIP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting to you my Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Borough for the year 1924.

This Report is an "Ordinary Report," but a "Survey Report" will be required for the current year. The latter form of report, as its name implies, calls for not only the statistics and summary of the work carried out during the year under consideration, but in addition a general account of the district, the activities of its inhabitants, its trades and manufactories, in fact a general survey of all that may affect the public health of the area.

The Mortality Rates are depressing reading when compared with the previous year, but 1923 was exceptional, and 1924 is by no means a bad average year in spite of the wet, sunless summer. In one particular rate, 1924 is surprisingly good. The Death Rate from Pulmonary Tuberculosis is lower than it has been for many years.

After some correspondence with the Registrar General I persuaded him that his population figure for Colchester was too low, and as a result it has been raised this year to 47,640, a figure, in my estimation, much nearer the correct number.

Last year I drew attention in my letter preceding the Annual Report to the small number of cases of Scarlet Fever that had been occurring for some years past and to the fact that some considered the disease to be dying out. The autumn and winter of 1924-25 showed that any such hope was decidedly premature as, though the disease never became epidemic, yet the number of cases notified far exceeded that of any year since 1915.

In conclusion I beg to thank the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee for their continued interest and support and the various members of the Health Department and Hospital Staffs for their loyal assistance.

I am, Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. F. CORFIELD,

Medical Officer of Health, etc.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

				1923	1924
Birth Rate	..	..	..	18·6	16·9
„ „ England and Wales	..	..	..	19·7	18·8
Death Rate	..	..	..	9·7	11·3
„ „ England and Wales	..	..	..	11·6	12·2
Infantile Mortality Rate	..	..	..	41·1	44·7
„ „ „ England and Wales				69·0	75·0
Pulmonary Tuberculosis Death Rate			..	0·67	0·66
Other Tubercular Diseases	..		..	0·11	0·20
Cancer Death Rate	..	..	..	1·27	1·38

Births		Total	Male	Female
805]	Legitimate	770	423	347
	Illegitimate	35	10	25

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, Child-Birth—

From Sepsis, Nil. From Other Causes, Nil.

		1923	1924
Legitimate Infantile Mortality Rate	..	41·7	37·2
Illegitimate " " "	..	27·7	171·2
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	..	Nil	2
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	..	1	8
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	..	1	Nil

A similar table of deaths over 70 years of age is given again this year. The total number of such deaths has increased from 152 to 190.

Deaths of Colchester Residents of 70 years and over.

70 and under 80	80 and under 90	90 and over	Total over 70
119	60	11	190

The ages of persons of 90 and over were—6 of 90, 1 of 91, 2 of 92 and 1 each of 93 and 95, 6 of these 11 were women.

Garrison and Institutional Populations.

Average Daily Strength of the Garrison	..	5,089
Officers, 171.	Women, 329.	
Other Ranks, 4,067.	Children, 522.	
Mental Hospitals Population	.. ..	3,026
Severalls Mental Hospital (Inmates and Resident Staff)	.. .. 1,843	Increase or Decrease. — 13
Royal Eastern Counties Institution	1,183	+ 85

The Causes of Death in Infants and Children under 5 years, 1924.

Cause of Death	Under 1 year	1—2 years	2—5 years	TOTALS
Scarlet Fever... ..	...	...	3	3
Measles ... ..	...	2	...	2
Whooping Cough 	4	3	1	8
Encephalitis Lethargica ... ..	...	...	1	1
Influenza 	2	...	...	2
Heart Disease 	2	...	...	2
Other Tuberculous Diseases ... ..	...	...	1	1
Bronchitis 	4	1	2	7
Pneumonia 	3	3	2	8
Diarrhoea and Enteritis ... ..	...	...	...	...
Congenital Debility and Pre-mature Birth 	20	...	1	21
Violent Deaths ... ..	...	...	2	2
Other Defined Diseases 	2	1	2	5
Totals 	37	10	15	62

Causes of Death in Colchester, 1924.

(Civilians only).

Causes	Males	Females	TOTALS
Enteric Fever	2	...	2
Measles ... ..	...	2	2
Scarlet Fever	2	2	4
Whooping Cough	1	7	8
Diphtheria ... ..	...	2	2
Influenza	7	10	17
Encephalitis Lethargica	2	...	2
Meningococcal Meningitis ... ..	...	...	...
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	14	15	29
Other Tuberculous Diseases	5	4	9
Cancer, Malignant Disease	33	28	61
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	...	...	...
Diabetes	4	..	4
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c.	18	19	37
Heart Disease	50	45	95
Arterio-sclerosis	4	9	13
Bronchitis	19	28	47
Pneumonia (all forms)	14	8	22
Other Respiratory Diseases ... ..	...	...	...
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum... ..	3	...	3
Diarrhoea, &c. (under 2 years) ... ..	...	...	...
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	5	1	6
Cirrhosis of Liver	2	2	4
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	5	4	9
Puerperal Sepsis ... ..	...	...	...
Other Accidents and Diseases of Preg- nancy and Parturition ... ..	...	...	...
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	15	7	22
Suicide	1	2	3
Other deaths from Violence	7	3	10
Other Defined Diseases	42	42	84
Causes Ill-defined or unknown	2	1	3
Totals	257	241	498

In the Annual Report for 1923, it was very easy to comment upon the statistics of the year as the mortality rates had almost universally improved. This year the story is very different. The Birth Rate has fallen; the Death Rate has increased from 9·7 to 11·3; the Infantile Mortality Rate, though still very good, has risen by 3·6.

The weather last year was blamed for a good deal and it is probably correct to blame it for the increases of mortality. For comparison the rates of England and Wales are given in the Statistical Table on page 4, and it will be seen that these have also increased.

The chief causes of death that produced this increase were :

Influenza	..	..	increased by	6
Cancer	..	..	„ „	6
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	..	..	„ „	11
Heart Disease	..	..	„ „	15
Bronchitis	..	..	„ „	22
Pneumonia	..	..	„ „	8

It will be seen at once that Respiratory Diseases and Diseases of the Heart and Arteries were the chief causes of death. The first one would expect in a wet and cold year, the second may be accounted for by the increased number of old persons who lived through 1923 but could not resist the inclement weather of 1924, 38 more persons over 70 years of age dying in 1924 than in 1923.

The Cancer and Tuberculosis Death Rates have not unduly increased and the rate for Pulmonary Tuberculosis is even lower than in 1923, only by 0·01, but this is a decidedly bright spot in what is otherwise a gloomy list of figures.

During the year the Medical Officer of Health drew the attention of the Registrar General to the probable incorrectness of the Census population figures, and as a result they were revised, and Colchester for 1924 has been given an estimated population which is certainly more nearly correct. The population for calculating Death Rates has been increased from 43,002 to 43,940, and for Birth Rates from 44,350 to 47,640, the latter figure being probably somewhere near the correct population figure.

These dual population figures may make statistics more exact but one single figure would be a good deal more satisfactory and useful for general purposes.

One result of this increase has been the sudden drop in the Birth Rate from 18·6 to 16·9, it cannot be helped and the latter figure is no doubt more nearly correct. Limitation of families is becoming a universal practice and the Birth Rate as a consequence declines, the pity is that the limitation is confined to the educated, the uneducated breed and multiply. It appears desirable that either the educated should abandon this practice or the uneducated should be taught it. Opinions are very divided upon this point.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Towards the end of the year notifications of cases of Scarlet Fever rapidly increased in number. The disease never became epidemic, nor was it confined to any particular area of the town.

In September 13 cases were notified, in October 40, in November 45, and in December 43. Thus out of a total of 183 cases notified, 128 occurred in the last three months of the year. These cases were widely distributed throughout the district, yet no school nor even class in the schools was noticeably affected. It seemed as though a certain number of persons were due to take Scarlet Fever but that the large majority were able to resist infection. No doubt prompt removal of almost all the cases to Hospital did something towards preventing the spread of the disease. Yet it was most unusual the way half-a-dozen cases would occur during the same week in different parts of the town and possibly some of them give rise to a second case, yet a week later several more would occur that, so far as could be ascertained, had had nothing to do with the previous cases and lived in quite other parts of the town.

The year was remarkably free from Diphtheria, particularly the latter months, for during the last four months of the year only nine cases were notified. Thus it would appear that what suited Scarlet Fever was unsuitable for Diphtheria, yet this is not usually held to be the case.

Both Measles and Whooping Cough occurred in epidemic form, the outbreak of Measles being the most severe that the Borough has experienced for many years. It is very gratifying to record that even so only two deaths were due to this disease. Whooping Cough levied a higher toll, causing eight deaths. These ten deaths were all of children under 5 years of age the period when these diseases are most fatal. Undoubtedly the precautions taken, owing to early information being received at the Health Offices

under the special Colchester Notification Regulations, resulted in many children's lives being saved that would otherwise have been claimed by one or other of these diseases.

Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

(Civilian and Military Cases.)

Disease	Total Cases Notified and Total Deaths	Total Cases and Deaths in Age Groups												Cases admitted to Hospital
		Under 1 Year	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	
Diphtheria	... 31 3	...	...	...	2	2	3	7	10	6	1	...	...	31
						1	1	1						
Scarlet Fever	... 183 5	...	3	5	8	19	62	3	19	23	5	1	...	172
				1	2		2							
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	... 8 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
										1		2	1	
Puerperal Fever	... 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
Pneumonia	... 36 15	1	1	...	1	2	3	3	8	8	2	5	2	...
			1		1			1	1	4	1	4	3	

Other Diseases Generally Notifiable.

Malaria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dysentery	... 4 1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...
												1		
Erysipelas	... 11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	3	3	2	...
Encephalitis (Lethargica)	... 4 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	...	...
					1						1			
Ophthalmia (Neonatorum)	... 2	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Other Diseases Notifiable Locally.

Measles	... 371 2	12	44	50	71	194	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
			2											
Whooping Cough	136 8	20 4	24 3	22 1	26	44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

The figures in *italics* in the above table give the number of deaths at the various age periods.

TUBERCULOSIS

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1
1
2-4	1	1	..	...	1	...
5-9	1	2	4	...	...	1	1
10-14	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	2
15-19	...	2	1	2	...	2	1	...
20-24	...	4	6	1	2	3	1	1
25-34	...	6	12	1	...	3	2	...
35-44	...	5	4	1	1	3	4	...
45-54	...	2	5	1	2	3	2	...
55-64	...	1	1	...	2	1	1	1
65 and upwards...	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...
Totals ...	23	33	11	14	15	14	4	5

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Number of Cases.	Cases			Vision Unimpaired	Vision Impaired	Total Blindness	Deaths
	Notified	Treated					
		At Home	In Hospital				
2	2	2	...	2	...	...	...

Five cases of Tuberculosis died without having been notified previously, a ratio of $\frac{5}{38}$ or 13.1 % of the Total Deaths from Tuberculosis.

The number of persons dying of Tuberculosis who had not been previously notified remained satisfactorily low. Notification is perhaps sometimes delayed but the reluctance of a general practitioner to label a patient as tubercular can be readily understood

and it is not uncommon for cases to be referred for diagnosis to the Medical Officer of the Tuberculosis Dispensary.

There were only two cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum and both of these were successfully treated and the vision maintained unimpaired.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

Cases admitted to the Isolation Hospital during 1924.

Authority sending in cases	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Typhoid Fever	Other Diseases	Total
Colchester Borough ...	128	13	1	14	156
	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>6</i>
Essex County Hospital ...	1	...	...	...	1
Mental Institutions ...	41	15	...	7	63
	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>4</i>
War Department ...	13	9	...	20	42
Walton U.D. ...	1	1	...	1	3
Frinton U.D. ...	1	...	...	...	1
Brightlingsea U.D. ...	1	...	...	...	1
Wivenhoe U.D. ...	3	...	...	...	3
Tendring R.D. ...	41	1	2	...	44
Lexden and Winstree R.D. ...	11	3	...	1	15
Long Melford R.D. ...	...	2	...	...	2
Essex County Council ...	...	...	...	55	55
				<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
Halstead Joint Hospital Board ...	6	2	...	...	8
Totals ...	247	46	3	98	394
	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>13</i>

Deaths from the various diseases are given in italics.

Four nurses at the Hospital and one ward maid contracted Scarlet Fever. None of them were severe cases and all made a good recovery.

No cases of Diphtheria occurred among the staff and this may be accounted for, partly because an unusually small number of cases were admitted to the Hospital during the year, but also because all the junior staff, both nursing and domestic, were tested with the Schick Reaction and those giving a positive result were given injections of toxin-antitoxin mixture to increase their powers of resistance.

The "98 Other Diseases" mentioned in the above table were—
55 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis sent in under the agreement with the Essex County Council.

4 Positive Diphtheria Contacts.

5 „ „ Carriers.

3 cases of Encephalitis Lethargica.

8 „ Measles.

5 „ Rubella.

4 „ Mumps.

4 „ Whooping Cough.

5 „ Tonsillitis.

1 case of each of the following diseases—Cellulitis, Burnt Hands, Appendicitis, Acute Poliomyelitis, Otitis Media.

Five of the above "Other Diseases" occurred among the Hospital staff. A nurse and ward-maid in the scarlet fever wards developed sore throats suspiciously like scarlet fever throats, which proved to be tonsillitis only. A ward-maid in the diphtheria wards who developed a sore throat and was admitted as a patient was found not to be suffering from diphtheria but tonsillitis. A nurse developed appendicitis and after a short stay in the Hospital was sent to one of the London hospitals and there operated upon successfully. One nurse in the scarlet fever wards was found to have "peeling" hands and only after she had been admitted to the wards did she remember that a few days before she had been using very strong disinfectant. This had caused her hands to peel.

All the cases of Whooping Cough, Measles, Rubella and Mumps were from the Garrison, except two cases of Rubella, these were nurses from Severalls Mental Hospital.

The case of Otitis Media was sent in as a case of Mumps and the patient with Cellulitis was sent in as suffering from Scarlet Fever.

Two of the children with Whooping Cough were also suffering from Broncho-pneumonia: both recovered.

The Scarlet Fever Death Rate was raised by the epidemic of this disease at the Royal Eastern Counties Institution for Imbeciles and Idiots, two cases from this Institution succumbing to the disease.

The Mortality Rates of certain Infectious Diseases per 1,000 population compared with those for the same diseases in England and Wales during 1924.

Disease	Number of Cases Notified in Colchester.	Death-Rate per 1,000 population.	
		England & Wales	Colchester
Scarlet Fever	183	0·02	0·08
Diphtheria	31	0·06	0·04
Enteric Fever	8	0·01	0·04
Diarrhœa* (under 2 years) ... ..	...	7·3	0·00
Measles†	371	0·12	0·04
Whooping Cough †	136	0·10	0·16

* The Diarrhœa Mortality Rate is calculated per 1,000 Births.

† Only the first case under 5 years of age in a family is notifiable in these diseases.

It will be noticed in the above Table that the mortality rates for Colchester of Scarlet Fever and Enteric Fever are above the rates for England and Wales.

Two deaths were ascribed to Enteric Fever; one of these cases died unnotified in the town, and was a doubtful case.

The low Death Rates for Diarrhœa, Diphtheria, and Measles are most gratifying.

Small-pox.

There is no diminution in the number of cases of this disease occurring in other parts of England. At present the disease has not gained any foothold in Essex, but it probably will come. The wisest course is to be vaccinated, or re-vaccinated, and so avoid catching it when it does come.

Scarlet Fever.

There was a decided increase in the number of cases of this disease. In all 183 persons were notified, and the large majority of these (172) were removed to the Isolation Hospital, out of these 41 were from the Royal Eastern Counties Institution for Imbeciles, and 13 from the Garrison.

Five deaths occurred, all of them in the Hospital. Two of them were imbeciles from the Institution. The resistance of such children to infections is very slight, and any infection in these children is liable to be fatal. The other three cases were very severe on admission, one lived only three days, and the other two eight and nine days respectively. Sixty-four cases were admitted to the Hospital from neighbouring districts; no deaths occurred among these.

Eleven cases of Scarlet Fever were isolated at home. These were all either in houses where there was ample accommodation, or cases that were so mild that removal to Hospital did not appear necessary.

The total number of cases of Scarlet Fever admitted to the Isolation Hospital was 247, and of these, 6 died.

Diphtheria.

An unusually small number of cases of this disease were notified, only 31; of these three died. One, an imbecile child died two days after admission; he was moribund when admitted suffering from laryngeal diphtheria. A second severe case died four hours after admission. The third case, after a long and protracted illness, developed Scarlet Fever, and in her weakened state could not survive the added infection.

Fifteen of the 31 cases were from the Royal Eastern Counties Institution, and in addition nine cases were sent in from neighbouring districts.

In all 46 cases of Diphtheria were admitted to the Hospital, and 3 deaths occurred. No cases were treated at home.

Enteric Fever.

Eight cases were notified, and one case died at home unnotified.

Only two cases belonged to the Borough, the one that died at home and one other that was removed to the Hospital. This was a child with a severe attack. After several weeks, during which she was dangerously ill, she pulled round and finally recovered. A man who was admitted at the end of 1923, and was from the

first a bad subject for the disease, being very corpulent and having a weak heart, succumbed early in the year.

The other six cases occurred in Severalls Mental Hospital, and were looked after there ; two of these died. The eighth case was a soldier who was nursed in the Military Hospital.

Cerebro-spinal Meningitis.

No cases of this disease were notified.

Encephalitis Lethargica.

Five cases of this disease occurred, four of which were notified. The unnotified case was a child whose death was certified as due to this disease. Two of the other cases were notified from the Essex County Hospital. One of the remaining two cases was nursed at home, and the other was removed to the Isolation Hospital. This last case was a man seriously ill with the disease, who died six days after admission.

TUBERCULOSIS.

It is very gratifying that the Death Rate from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, in spite of the sunless, rainy summer, was lower than it has been for many years. A rate of 0.66 per thousand is most satisfactory, particularly as the rate has been steadily falling since 1920.

There is a County Tuberculosis Dispensary in Colchester, of which the Medical Officer of Health is in charge, and during the year 762 attendances were made by patients. Many of these were sent by doctors, and others were persons who had been in contact with sufferers from this disease, and who wished to know if they themselves showed any signs of having contracted it.

There is a Sanatorium Pavilion of 12 beds at the Borough Isolation Hospital. Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis are sent to this by the County Council, and up to 1924 it was for male

patients only. In 1924 a change was made, and now only female patients are admitted.

For some time past it has been felt that sufficient accommodation was not available for advanced cases of this disease, and during the year representations were made to the County Council urging that hospital beds should be provided for such cases. As a result of negotiations, two small wards of four beds each at the Borough Isolation Hospital were offered to the County Council for advanced cases occurring in Colchester and the immediate neighbourhood, on the understanding that at any time these wards should be again made available should they be required for the infectious diseases for which the Hospital was intended. At the end of the year negotiations were still in progress.

During the year the Medical Officer of Health was one of three Tuberculosis Officers requested to review and report upon the County Scheme for dealing with Tuberculosis. The report was completed and sent to the County Medical Officer in the autumn.

Measles and Whooping Cough.

A large and widespread epidemic of Measles occurred during the year. Under the Colchester Regulations the first case of either of these diseases under 5 years of age in a house is notifiable and not other cases. In this way, 371 cases of Measles and 136 cases of Whooping Cough were notified and it is probably no exaggeration to quadruple both these figures to arrive at a correct estimate of the actual number of cases. This would give 1,484 cases of Measles and 544 cases of Whooping Cough. Only two deaths were due to Measles and eight to Whooping Cough. There can be little doubt that parents are realizing the dangers to child life of Measles and not treating this disease as only a childish complaint that needs no particular care. The deaths due to Measles have considerably decreased during the past few years and this is to no small extent due to the educative work the Health Nurses have carried out in the homes. Whooping Cough does not show the same steady reduction in the death-rate and it will be necessary to pay more particular attention to this disease in future.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Visits paid to Infants by the Health Nurses during the year.

Under 1 month	1 3 months	3 6 months	6 12 months	1 2 years	2 5 years	Total Visits
1,040	826	1,010	1,901	2,718	4,283	11,778

Number of Visits to Illegitimate Children	..	625
„ Long Tube Bottles being used	..	nil
„ occasions where Infants were sleeping with their parents ..	.. ..	24
„ Still Birth enquiries	.. ..	12

Notification of Births Act.

Number of Children born alive and notified in accord- ance with the Act ..	..	764
„ Children born alive and not so notified	..	30
„ Still Births notified	..	23
„ Births notified by Midwives	..	662
„ „ „ Parents or Doctors	..	225

When the Health Department receives information of poor children seriously ill and without the care of a nurse, one is sent from the District Nursing Association under an arrangement between this Association and the Borough Council. In this way 19 children were looked after during 1924 and the nurses paid 135 visits. The children were suffering from the following diseases:— Measles (8); Whooping Cough and Broncho-Pneumonia (5); Ophthalmia Neonatorum (2); and one of each of the following, Measles and Pneumonia; Whooping Cough; Bronchitis; Pneumonia.

Two of the children with Whooping Cough and Broncho-Pneumonia died, all the others recovered.

The Infant Clinic.

Number of new babies brought to the Clinic	..	174
„ Attendances made .. ..	..	1,055
Dried Milk supplied free or at reduced prices	lbs.	324
„ „ „ at full special price ..	lbs.	1,862
Meat Extract supplied at full special price in 10-oz.		
cartons .. ..	..	312
Flannel supplied at a special price ..	yds.	304½
Wool „ „ „ ..	lbs.	37½
Baby Garments made up at special prices	..	9
Paper Patterns for Baby Clothing given free	..	13
Malt and Cod Liver Oil	lbs.	73
Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites ..4-oz. bottles		37

These figures are not materially altered when compared with those of 1923. Six fewer new babies were brought to the Clinic and the attendances were less by 179. On the other hand the amount of free milk has increased by 36 lbs. and similarly the quantities of Meat Extract, Flannel, Wool, etc., sold have increased.

The Clinic is situate in Trinity Street, at the Health Offices and is open on Wednesday afternoon every week. It appears to have reached about the maximum number of mothers and babies likely to attend. The figures for the past six years are as follows :

YEAR		NUMBER OF NEW BABIES		NUMBER OF ATTENDANCES
1919	..	120	..	1,106
1920	..	305	..	2,093
1921	..	265	..	2,367
1922	..	170	..	1,281
1923	..	180	..	1,234
1924	..	174	..	1,055

Up to and including 1921 the Infant Clinic was held in the Girl's Patriotic Club in Queen Street and it appears at first sight that the move from these premises to Trinity Street had had a serious effect in diminishing the number of babies brought to the Clinic. This is probably true to some extent, but it must not be forgotten that 1920 was the year when more babies were born than had been the case for some years previously, and the figure of that year has not nearly been reached since, as the figures below show.

Number of Births 1919-1924.

1919.	1920.	1921.	1922.	1923.	1924.
718	1,064	904	787	827	805

It does not seem unreasonable to estimate that about 200 new babies, and some 2,000 attendances, is the best figure that the present clinic is likely to reach. Yet this does not include a great many babies who would benefit by attendance at a clinic. It therefore appears very desirable that additional accommodation should be found for another clinic in a different part of the town. This, to use a convenient phrase, will tap a new source of supply and attract mothers and babies who find the present clinic inconvenient, either owing to the day upon which it is held, or the distance, or for some other reason.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, 1919.

	1922.	1923.	1924.
Number of families supplied with free fresh milk	102	84	71
Number of pints supplied ..	8,836	8,309	6,167½

It is difficult to account for the diminution in the number of families supplied with free fresh milk. The same routine has been carried out as in previous years, and no lower standard has been adopted. Every application is carefully considered, and borderline cases are given the benefit of the doubt.

No instances of persons attempting to obtain the milk by giving incorrect information have been discovered. All statements of income are checked most carefully.

Puerperal Fever.

Two cases of this disease were notified. A doctor was in attendance at the birth in both cases, and both recovered.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Notifications were received of two cases of this disease. Both children recovered with sight unimpaired. In both cases a midwife had been in attendance at the birth.

Epidemic Diarrhœa.

No cases occurred. This disease may be considered extinct in Colchester. It is always possible that a few cases of severe, or even fatal, Diarrhœa may occur in infants owing to bad or incorrect feeding, but under modern conditions, with proper supervision by Health Nurses and at an Infant Clinic, this disease in epidemic form should never occur.

NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

A statement of these arrangements and a list and description of the Institutions was given in the Annual Report for 1921. There is nothing fresh to add to what was stated in that Report.

Ambulance Facilities.

The same facilities are available as in 1921.

Laboratory Work.

Specimens Examined.	Results.		TOTALS.	
	Positive.	Negative or Normal.	1923.	1924.
Swabs for Diphtheria B. ...	188	738	1043	926
Sputum for Tubercle B. ..	21	79	130	100
Blood for Typhoid and Para- typhoid Reaction ...	2	8	27	10
Milk for Tubercle B. ...	1	6	5	7
Pus for Gonococcus ...	2	2	2	4
Hair for Ringworm ...	47	28	56	75
Urine Examinations (various) ...	2	2	2	4
Spinal Fluid for Meningococcus	...	3	2	3
Fluid for Pneumococcus ...	...	2	...	2
Blood for Anthrax ...	1	...	...	1
Town Water Supply { Spring Supply ... 9 } Analysis ... { Artesian Well ... 9 } Other Water Supply Analysis ...			20	18
			...	4
Total Specimens Examined	...	...	1285	1154

The number of specimens examined is about normal, no outbreak of disease caused any unusual increase.

The number of individual cases of Ringworm did not increase, but the increased number of examinations of hairs only indicates the care taken that no child shall be passed as cured until thorough and repeated examinations have been carried out.

Diphtheria Antitoxin and Throat Swabs are always available for the use of general practitioners at the Health Offices during the day time and at night or week-ends at the Town Hall Police Station.

ADOPTIVE ACTS, BYELAWS AND LOCAL REGULATIONS.

No changes were made in these during 1924.

ENQUIRIES AND ADVICE.

During the last seven months of 1924 a record was kept of the number of persons who called at the offices of the Medical Officer of Health. The total was 765 visitors, or an average of nearly five a day. The largest number came upon some matter of public health. The number of visits may be divided into : 498 on matters of Public Health such as Housing or Complaints of Insanitary Conditions ; 183 on matters concerning the Maternity and Child Welfare Work of the department ; 62 were concerned with the Medical Inspection of School Children ; 77 were enquiries from or concerning sufferers from Tuberculosis ; and 45 were in connection with patients at the Isolation Hospital.

This number of visitors does not include the very large number of persons who come to see the Sanitary Inspector nor does it include messengers or those who have only come to fetch a swab or sputum flask or who have brought specimens for examination. In short it only includes what might be described as bona fide visitors to the Medical Officer's Department.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The tabular statement below summarises the work of the Sanitary Inspector's Department.

Work of the Sanitary Inspector's Department with action taken under the Public Health Acts, Bye-laws, etc.

Number of—

Complaints received	..	..	283
Nuisance detected or reported	..	..	1,997
Factories and Workshops inspected	..	..	439
Homeworkers' Premises inspected	..	..	360
Informal Notices served	..	..	1,025
Statutory Notices served	..	..	273
Summonses taken out	..	..	—
Nuisances abated	..	..	1,667

HOUSING.

Number of—

Houses and Workshops cleansed	..	..	44
Overcrowded Houses where Overcrowding was abated			11
Defective Roofs repaired	..	..	55
Rainwater Pipes and Gutters repaired or renewed	..	..	48
Houses or Workshops in which Ventilation was improved	..	..	9

WATER SUPPLY.

Number of—

Hand-flushed Closets connected with Water Supply			686
Defective Closet Water Fittings repaired or renewed			169
Houses provided with Water	..	..	9
Defects reported to Water Supply Department	..	..	22
Wells cleansed and repaired	..	..	—
Samples collected for Analysis	..	..	4

DRAINAGE.

Number of—

Drains unstopped or repaired	..	..	117
New Closet Pans fixed	..	..	192
Water Closets repaired	..	..	62

Filthy Closets cleansed and lime-washed	..	2
New Closets built	.. ..	14
Privies and Cesspools abolished	.. ..	4
Old drains and Traps abolished	.. ..	6
New Drains, Gullies, Disconnecting Chambers, etc., fixed	.. .. ..	54
Defective or Insufficiently Ventilated Soil-pipes remedied	.. .. ..	3
Houses connected to the Sewer	.. ..	4

Other Sanitary Work.

Number of—

Other defects remedied	.. ..	500
Defects reported to the Surveyor's Department	..	36
Ashpits abolished	.. ..	12
Ashbins provided	.. ..	398
Yards paved	.. ..	3
Removals of Manure or other offensive Matter	..	44
Nuisances from Animals improperly kept abated	..	109
Dead Animals removed from public places and buried		41
Defects reported to H.M. Inspector of Factories	..	1

The work of conversion of hand-flushed Closets into proper water-closets has been continued. Gradually the whole of the old-fashioned Closets are being modernised by water being laid on to them. This work was begun in 1911 but had to be discontinued until after the war. The great advance made in the last four years is shown by the figures below.

Number of Hand-flushed Closets converted into Water-Closets.

1911-15	1916-20	1921	1922	1923	1924
166	59	222	646	813	686

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

This year the Home Office have asked that the following Tables that were included in the Reports of Medical Officers of Health until 1920, but were discontinued, may now again be inserted.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including Inspection made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises (1)	Number of		
	Inspections (2)	Written Notices (3)	Prosecutions (4)
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	33	4	...
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries)	134	35	...
Workplaces (Other than Outworkers' premises)	272	35	...
Total	439	74	..

2.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars (1)	Number of Defects			Number of Prosecutions (5)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts* :—</i>				
Want of cleanliness ...	39	39	...	...
Want of ventilation ...	2	2	...	...
Overcrowding ... ..	...	...	...	...
Want of drainage of floors ...	...	...	...	...
Other nuisances... ..	31	21	..	...
<i>Sanitary accommodation—</i>				
Insufficient... ..	2	2	...	...
Unsuitable or defective	3	2	...	...
Not separate for sexes ...	2	1	...	...
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts :—</i>				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouse (s. 101)	...	..	...	...
Other offences (Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the sections mentioned in the Medical Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921). ...	5	4	1	...
Total	84	71	1	...

* Including those specified in sections 2, 3, 7 and 8 of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as remediable under the Public Health Acts.

INSPECTION OF PLACES WHERE FOOD IS PREPARED.

Premises					Number	Inspections
Slaughter-houses :—						
Registered	...	...	10	}	21	193
Licensed	...	...	11	}		
Bakehouses	...	...	37	}	38	96
Underground	...	...	1	}		
Dairies and Milk Shops	...	...	...		83	213
Cowsheds	...	...	...		63	142

These figures have not altered materially from year to year but under the new Meat Regulations, an increased number of inspections of Slaughter Houses will be necessary if the full intention of these regulations is to be carried out.

The baking of Bread is carried out in the local Bake-houses in a clean and satisfactory way but a good deal of anxiety has recently been expressed as to the way in which this food is handled. Complaints have been received, of bread being delivered by men with dirty hands or of bread being carried rubbing against ordinary clothing or even of loaves being dropped in the road and wiped upon a coat sleeve before delivery. Many bakers no doubt take all reasonable precautions, but there is something in these complaints and the only way of completely answering them, would be for all bread to be delivered in grease-proof paper. This is being done by some bakers in other towns and the time is probably not far distant when the Minister of Health will issue regulations dealing with this matter.

It is probable that many of the public would be willing to pay a little extra for bread delivered in waxed paper.

The examination of all the milking herds in the Borough has as usual been carried out twice by a Veterinary Surgeon. He examined 478 cows and could detect no Tubercular lesion in any of them. One cow was found to be suffering from Mastitis and the cowkeeper was warned not to use her milk for human consumption. The number of cows examined is 42 more than in 1923.

AMOUNT OF UNSOUND FOOD DESTROYED DURING THE YEAR.

	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
Beef	1	2	10
Mutton ... ..	...	1	17
Pork ... ..	...	3	9
Fish	2	3	11
Offal (Kidneys, Liver, etc.)	4	3	2
Tinned Foods (3 tins) ... ..	...	...	10

In addition to the above, 1 carcase and 2 fore-quarters of beef, 1 carcase of mutton and 9 pecks of shrimps were destroyed as being unfit.

All the above unsound food was surrendered voluntarily and the inspector came across no case of any attempt to expose unsound food for sale.

During September the police notified the Department that an ox was lying in one of the Borough slaughter-houses suspected of having died of Anthrax. Microscopic examination of the blood proved this to be the case, and all possible precautions were taken. After the disposal of the carcase the slaughter-house was thoroughly disinfected and re-limewashed.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

	Number.	Inspections.
Fish Friers	20	97
Gut Scrapers	1	33
Tallow Melters	2	8
Rag, Bone and Skin Dealers	5	6
Total	28	144

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

The one Common Lodging House remains the only one in the Borough. It has been carried on satisfactorily throughout the year.

THE SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS, AND THE MILK & CREAM REGULATIONS.

Result of Analysis of Samples taken under the SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.

Samples.	Number of Samples.	Adulter- ated.	Nature of Adulteration.
New Milk	56	13	11 Fat Deficient only :—
Flour	1		15·0 per cent. ; 10·0 per cent. ;
Prescriptions	2		10·0 per cent. ; 6·6 per cent. ;
Rice	1		10·0 per cent. ; 6·6 per cent. ;
Sugar	1		13·3 per cent. ; 16·6 per cent. ;
Cocoa	1		23·3 per cent. ; 10·0 per cent. ;
Sago	1		& 10·0 per cent. respectively.
Coffee	2		
White Pepper	1		
Stout	2		
Butter	9		Two Fat Deficient and added Water :—
Arrowroot	1		
Raspberry Jam	1		50·0 per cent. Fat Deficient,
Oatmeal	2		13·6 per cent. added Water ;
Preserved Cream	2		& 3·3 per cent. Fat Deficient,
Cream	3		27·0 per cent. Added Water.
Brandy	1		
Seidlitz Powder	1		
Rum	1		
Margarine	1		
Tea	1		
Tincture of Iodine	1		
Port Wine	1		
Malt Vinegar	1		
Bread	1		
Condensed Milk	1		
	96	13	

Of the 13 adulterated samples of milk 7 were original samples taken by the food inspector in the ordinary course of his work. The six others were following-up samples, one taken in course of delivery and five from the farms.

Two of the vendors were prosecuted and fined £5 including costs and £2 including costs respectively. The vendors in the other cases were all warned.

*Milk and Cream Regulations.***1.—Milk and Cream not sold as Preserved Cream.**

	(a) Number of Samples examined for the pre- sence of a preservative.	(b) Number in which a Pre- servative was reported to be present and per- centage of preservative found in each sample.
Milk	56	...
Cream	3	...
Cream sold as Preserved Cream	2	(1) 0·39 per cent. (2) 0·39 per cent.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

No changes have occurred in the Staff since 1923.

HOUSING.

Number of New Houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	143
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts, 1919 or 1923 :	
(i.) By the Local Authority ..	36
(ii.) By other bodies or persons ..	107

UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.**I.—INSPECTION.**

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	2,264
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	1,004
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	27

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	194
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II.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ..	77
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III.—ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A. Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit ;	
(a) by owners	—
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	—

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	273
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied	
(a) by owners	260
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	13

C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the
Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909.

(1)	Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders. .	3
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made . .	3
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	—
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	2
(5)	Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders . .	2

The number of new houses erected is more by 52 than the number erected in 1923, and in addition over 50 were in course of erection at the end of the year.

Distribution of the New Houses.

North Ward.	South Ward.	East Ward.	West Ward.
15	21	47	60

The number of "dwelling-houses rendered fit" (Section II.) appears small when compared with the number "found not to be in all respects reasonably fit" (Section I., Sub-section (4)). The reason for this is that although many small repairs have been carried out, yet to make many of them really fit would mean large structural alterations, and the houses are not worth the outlay. Gradually, as houses become more plentiful, these houses will probably be included in Sub-section (3) of Section I., but at present they cannot be considered so dangerous and injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.

The number of houses (27) considered unfit for human habitation are considerably less when considered as occupied homes.

Their numbers were reduced by the demolition of eight during the year—two under Statutory Demolition Orders, and six were pulled down by the Owners under Informal Orders from the Health Offices; three were Closed under Statutory Orders, and their occupiers found lodging elsewhere; and seven are unoccupied, or used only for storage purposes, leaving only 9 of the 27 still used as dwelling-houses at the end of the year.

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